



TRIBAL AND STATE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 11, 2022
Banquet Room 803, Prairie Knights Casino and Resort
7932 State Highway 24
Fort Yates, North Dakota

Senator Rich Wardner, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.

Members present: Senators Rich Wardner, Joan Heckaman, Dave Oehlke; Representatives Terry B. Jones, Chet Pollert

Members absent: Senator Jessica Bell; Representative Joshua A. Boschee

Others present: Senator Donald Schaible, Mott, and Representative Jim Schmidt, Huff, members of the Legislative Management

Representative Karen M. Rohr, Mandan

Nathan Davis, Executive Director, Indian Affairs Commission; Janet Alkire, Chairwoman, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

It was moved by Senator Oehlke, seconded by Senator Heckaman, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the August 31, 2021, and September 1, 2021, meetings be approved as distributed.

Ms. Janet Alkire, Chairwoman, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, presented testimony ([Appendix B](#)) regarding the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's priority issues. She noted:

- A new health care facility with adequate rooms and updated equipment to meet the population needs of the reservation is necessary due to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which highlighted the chronic underfunding of the Indian Health Service and the health care disparities faced by the tribe.
- The Municipal, Rural and Industrial Program at the reservation is subject to extreme restrictions and oversight which hinders the tribe from providing water to those most in need. The annual operation and maintenance budget for the program is \$2.1 million, but the replacement need for the annual budget is \$4 million. There are 700 homes without access to running water and 2.3 million acres of agricultural land requiring water. The immediate need for water infrastructure on the reservation is a high priority.
- The tribe has 500 miles of roads to maintain and the road conditions are not decent or safe. The \$680,000 allocated to road maintenance annually by the Bureau of Indian Affairs is insufficient and has forced the tribe to supplement the road maintenance budget by allocating \$500,000 of tax revenue to fill the gap in annual funding.
- The tribe has 15 police officers for approximately 10,000 tribal members. The tribe lacks enough police officers to enforce the law and protect the residents in the 10 communities on the 2.3 million acre reservation. The largest criminal issues the tribe faces are rampant drug activity and jurisdictional issues as it relates to prosecution and detention. The tribe's detention facilities have a maximum capacity of 48 inmates which is inadequate and has forced the tribe to contract with out-of-state or federal facilities which strains the tribe's law enforcement budget. The tribe also needs a new justice center.

Some committee members expressed concern regarding the lack of adequate water infrastructure and the need for police officers and a new detention facility.

No further business appearing, Chairman Wardner adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Christopher S. Joseph
Counsel

ATTACH:2